

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

GCTV Studio, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA

Approved 05.14.14

Present: Margaret Betts (MB) (arrived 7:15); Maryelen Calderwood (MC); Daryl Essensa (DE); John Lunt (JL); William Martin (WM); Francia Wisnewski (FW); Student Representatives Lily Richards and Vicki Balis. **Absent:** Donna Gleason (DG). **Also present:** Susan Hollins (SH), Supt.; Elizabeth Gilman (EG), GPS Business Administrator; other school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (MC, DE, WM, FW), Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. Chris Shores of *Recorder* is audiorecording.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes

MC moved, FW 2nd, to approve draft minutes of March 20 and March 26, 2014. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Tara Cloutier, parent and co-chair of Newton School PTO, shared letter from PTO in support of ELT; interest in after-school program at Newton; request for all School Cte members to use gpsk12 email.

Alicia Pease, parent, shared desire among parents to have small-size choices for 4th grade in addition to Math-Science Academy, concerns that MSA may be outgrowing location. Discussion: district's building capacities; communication with parents; channels for parent involvement.

At 7 p.m. Chair Martin opened **Public Hearing on Budget**. No member of the public spoke.

IV. Reports

A. Student Representatives Lily Richards and Vicki Balis announced GHS student Chelsey Opalenik elected president of Western Mass. Association of Student Councils; upcoming GHS events: blood drive; spring sports; prom; AP exams.

B. Chair

WM previewed full agenda; School Cte likely to need second mtg in April.

C. Superintendent

SH reported on:

- increasing enrollment
- electricity outage at 4 Corners
- Composting grant: plans to apply for grant \$30K over 3 yrs. Amy Donovan, Franklin Co Solid Waste Mgt District, has submitted cost analysis, program roll-out. 16 schools in Franklin Co already doing compost program. Tray options: 3-cents/Styrofoam tray; 7.5-cents/compostable tray (countywide bulk purchasing may reduce price); washable trays.
- William Bazyk, Director of Student Services, reported good progress in creating Special Education Parent Advisory Cte.
- School Snack Program: MC's Subcte will review SH's written report. Snack program in 3 schools: (GMS, Math-Science, Newton) that have extended or after-school programs; federally funded.

- Strong GHS music program: band, chorus in state competition; highest enrollment ever in music programs
- Improvements in office staffing: Custodial Maintenance Supervisor; Transportation Coordinator; Personnel office.
- Film Festival this Friday

D. Subcommittees

1. Negotiations:

JL reported negotiations with Unit A (teachers) beginning with good tone.

2. Policy, HR & Planning Subcte.

FW reported progress on policies re: attorney (ready for 2nd reading next mtg); nurses; snacks. RE: Background checks: Potential to open office in Greenfield to serve Franklin County (rather than GPS staff traveling to Springfield). **JL moved to change language of current policy in lieu of creating an entirely new policy on background checks. MC 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

V. Old Business

A. Academy of Early Learning

SH brought request from AEL staff re: use of half-day Friday. **MC moved to approve AEL using the one-half school day on Friday for purposes of collaborative planning time, curriculum coordination and group supervision for all teachers and not for the purpose of home visits. MB 2nd.** Discussion: Staff is not doing home visits. Does half-day Friday compensate for contractual requirement for daily 45-consecutive-minutes planning time (not in teachers' Mon-Thurs schedule)? Is it compliant with current contract or need to include in negotiations of upcoming contract? Desire not to set precedent granting unusual amount or schedule of planning time. Community needs to coordinate home visits by other organizations. Joan Schell part-time administrator does AEL teacher evaluations. **Motion passed 4-2 (NO: DE, WM).**

JL made a motion that Supt and administration review AEL to make sure we're in compliance with all contractual obligations. MB 2nd. Discussion: Desire for complete program review met by recent NEAYC accreditation? Interest in Innovation School status for AEL. **Motion passed 4-2 (NO: DE, WM).**

B. Budget Vote 2014-15

SH provided overview of "2014-2015 Budget Overview" document, including:

- Increasing enrollment = additional teachers
- New transportation contract increase \$115K
- Budget is "depressed" by \$200K for out-of-district placements; desire to pre-pay
- Mayor proposed 2% increase over last year's budget (less extraordinary increases)
- Reducing school psychologist services and OP-PT services (no cuts of active staff)

Discussion: Out-of-district special education costs. Lack of federal/state funding for federal/state mandates. State surplus not coming to schools, communities.

MC moved to request Mayor to support a transfer of \$250,000 but not less than \$200,000 to the school department prior to June 30, 2014, for the purpose of prepaying a portion of July, August, and September special education tuitions. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

MC moved to approve Draft Budget in amount of \$17,317,358. DE 2nd. Motion passed 5-0-1 (WM abstain).

B. Virtual School Transition

SH reported that transition successfully progressing, including special education records. K12 finances closed out.

D. Superintendent Search Update

DE reported that site visits completed Goal: appointment by end of April.

E. Student Performance

MC moved to table V. E. School Performance. JL 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. New Business

A. Collaborative for Educational Services New By-laws

MB unable to attend CES mtgs: same night as School Cte. Discussion: GPS benefits little from CES. What are annual dues? Consider forming local collaborative: Franklin County, Gill-Montague/Greenfield, Mohawk/Greenfield. Do CES services fulfill legal requirements? MB to research, report at May School Cte mtg.

B. 2014-2015 School Year Calendar

SH reviewed draft 2014-2015 calendar. Calendar should ideally be confirmed Feb-March. Discussion: No conflict with MCAS. Union has reviewed. Kindergarten screening moved from May to Sept.; screening purpose not to deny entrance but to identify needs; move reduces stress on parents. K students have a later start date. Do buildings have energy plan for long vacations?
DE moved to accept draft school calendar. MC 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

C. No Fee Food Program

SH presented program for universal free lunch (similar to free breakfast program). Avoids continuously increasing lunch prices students pay. Started at Newton; expand to all schools in Sept. Benefits: more students eat; district's food service program gets more money. **MB moved to adopt free lunch program. JL 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

D. Space Utilization Proposal

SH researched alternatives for 4th grade. Possible to fit into elementary schools w/ modifications such as eliminating art/music rooms. Would exacerbate traffic-safety issues. Elementary principals do not support change. K-5 schools ideal, but not easy in our building/enrollment configuration.

Space changes considered for next year: increase enrollment at Math-Science Academy by eliminating computer lab room (computers go to library and classrooms). Discussion: Plan now for increased MAS enrollment: move autism program? No room to accept 4th grade choice-in MAS students next year.

Choice issue to be on May agenda. SH to email law to members.

E. K-3 Program of Studies

SH presented draft of "Elementary Program of Studies K-3, March 2014." Members to review and discuss at May School Cte mtg.

F. Expanded Learning Time Memorandum of Understanding

SH presented "Expanded Learning Time Report, April 6, 2014." Supported by staff, parents at Newton, GMS, Math-Science Academy. Research on reading-math shows additional time makes a difference. SH recommends leaving ELT in place for next yr., allow new supt to study (including how other districts use ELT funds). 2-yr MOU with union covers next yr. School Cte affirms continuation of ELT next year.

VII. Other Business

A. Transportation contract

JL moved to authorize Chair to sign transportation contract. MC 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment

MC moved to adjourn. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary